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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Participation in Operation Alert 1956

1. This memorandum contains a recommendation submitted for DCI approval. Such recommendation is contained in paragraph 9.
2. A national readiness exercise designated as "Operation Alert 1956" will be conducted over the period beginning at 10:00 A.M., Eastern Standard Time, 20 July 1956 and ending at 11:00 A.M., Eastern Standard Time, 26 July 1956. The Director of the Office of Defense Mobilization has been designated as the overall coordinator of the exercise and he has issued instructions governing participation therein in the form of CDM Program Memorandum I-7, Supplement 1, dated 10 April 1956 (attached hereto, marked "Tab A"). The stated purpose of the exercise is to acquaint personnel with the types of problems which a massive attack against the United States with nuclear weapons might generate, and to train them in the performance of essential functions, tasks, and operations related to such problems. This includes testing of the readiness of the Federal Government at all levels to perform its essential wartime functions; of the civil defense organization at all levels to carry out its planned operations; of the military establishment at all levels to initiate actions required by general war and to render support and assistance to civil authority and civil defense operations, consistent with the execution of its primary missions; and of the resource agencies at all levels to mobilize and allocate national resources to meet the requirements. The standards governing that portion of the exercise which is designed to test civil defense organizations and plans were prepared by the Federal Civil Defense Administration and are set forth in its pamphlet entitled "Standards, National Civil Defense Training Exercise, Operation Alert 1956" (Tab B).
3. The number of employees to participate in the exercise is left to the discretion of the head of the agency or department concerned, within the scope of the principle that, in making such determination, the agency head will endeavor to select a sufficient number to test the adequacy of the agency's plans to conduct its essential wartime functions at the relocation sites and at the same time leave a sufficient number at the headquarters to carry on current business.

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4. The assumed attack will be a single massive one with nuclear weapons directed against military, industrial, and population targets in the United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Panama Canal Zone. There will be no strategic warning. There will be from 1 hour and 40 minutes to 3 hours and 15 minutes tactical warning in the continental United States. The attack pattern embracing over 70 critical target areas (including Washington, D. C.) is set forth in Tab A. In addition, it is assumed that the enemy can be expected to exploit any and all means to injure the United States, including the mining of ports and approaches, submarine attacks against shipping off the coasts, submarine-launched rocket and missile attacks against shore installations, commando-type raids against isolated targets of prime military importance, and sabotage and covert activities with chemical, biological, atomic, and other weapons.

5. The actual playing of the exercise will consist of the propounding and solving of simulated problems arising out of the attack pattern and designed to test the effectiveness of individual agency plans in and of themselves and in relation to those of other agencies, and to test the effectiveness of proposed and alternate decisions made in the light of the problems. The exercise will cover a simulated period of 7 days, beginning with the first warning of an attack. There will be no telescoping of time.

6. The National Security Council Staff will be present at our relocation site during the exercise and will participate in its own exercise along lines which have not as yet been determined. It is considered likely that there will be at least one meeting of the Planning Board Assistants scheduled to take place at our relocation site during the exercise, which meeting probably will be devoted to the transaction of actual business as distinguished from problem play. It is assumed also that there will be at least one meeting of the Intelligence Advisory Committee at our relocation site during the course of the exercise, and that it will be devoted to the transaction of actual live business.

7. The limitations inherent in CIA participation in this exercise have been recognized by the Office of Defense Mobilization and allowances have been made for departures from the established pattern of participation, in the light of security problems posed and the over-all mission of the Central Intelligence Agency. Accordingly, this Agency was exempted from submitting a problem to the Office of Defense Mobilization for inclusion within the over-all problems which will be used during the exercise. Moreover, the responsible officials of the Office of Defense Mobilization agreed to, and approved, the principle that the general pattern

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